

Disability Studies

Minor in Disability Studies

The interdisciplinary field of disability studies explores the experiences of people with disabilities—one of the largest minorities in the United States and worldwide—as well as the ways in which conceptions and representations of disability and “the normal” have shaped human experiences more generally. Treating disability as a crucial element of human diversity, the Minor in Disability Studies approaches disability as a social, cultural, and political construct rather than just a medical condition (as it is commonly viewed). Taught by faculty from the Colleges of Liberal Arts, Nursing and Health Innovation, Business, and Education as well as the School of Social Work, this flexible and multidisciplinary minor prepares students for a variety of graduate programs and for careers in law, education, public health, engineering, nursing, architecture, medicine, social work, communication, public history and museums, and sports management and coaching, among other fields.

Students seeking to minor in Disability Studies should first consult with advisors in their major departments or programs for approval, then meet with the director and advisor of the Minor in Disability Studies. A minor in Disability Studies consists of 18 hours, including two required courses: History of Disability (DS 3307/HIST 3307) and Disability Studies Internship (DS 4395). Students also take two to four core disability studies courses and can take up to two approved electives. No more than four courses may be completed in a single discipline.

The Disability Studies Internship (DS 4395) is a supervised internship/capstone course through which students apply the academic skills they have acquired in Disability Studies courses. Interns work at an approved business, academic, or non-profit site that focuses on adapted sports, disability history, assistive technology, disability rights and policy, or universal design and accessibility; they also complete a capstone essay. Students should complete DS 4395 as one of their final courses for the minor and must have already taken or be taking DS 3307/HIST 3307.

Some of the electives change focus from term to term and may therefore not be relevant to the minor during a particular semester. Credit will only be given when the topic of the course (or a substantial portion) focuses on issues related to disability. Other relevant courses not listed below may also be used to fulfill the minor, with approval from the director of the Minor in Disability Studies. For that reason and for the purposes of planning the internship, it is important that students consult with the advisor for the minor before registering each semester.

Required courses (two courses)

HIST 3307	HISTORY OF DISABILITY	3
or DS 3307	HISTORY OF DISABILITY	
DS 4395	DISABILITY STUDIES INTERNSHIP	3

Core Disability Studies courses (at least two courses)

DS 2301	TOPICS IN DISABILITY STUDIES	3
DS 3308	HISTORY OF MADNESS	3
or HIST 3308	HISTORY OF MADNESS	
DS 3312	DISABILITY & SOCIAL WORK	3
or SOCW 3312	DISABILITY & SOCIAL WORK	
DS 3321	TOPICS IN DISABILITY STUDIES	3
DS 3327	CYBORGS AND PROSTHETICS	3
or HIST 4327	CYBORGS AND PROSTHETICS	
DS 3346	DISABILITY IN MASS MEDIA	3
or COMM 3346	DISABILITY IN MASS MEDIA	
DS 3331	RESEARCH IN DISABILITY STUDIES	3
DS 3355	UNIVERSAL DESIGN & ACCESSIBILITY IN THE PERFORMING ARTS	3
or THEA 3355	UNIVERSAL DESIGN & ACCESSIBILITY IN THE PERFORMING ARTS	
DS 3399	DISABILITY AND ART	3
or ART 3399	DISABILITY AND ART	
DS 4100	WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL	1
DS 4191	CONFERENCE COURSE	1
DS 4291	CONFERENCE COURSE	2
DS 4329	DISABILITY & WORK	3
or MANA 4329	DISABILITY & WORK	
DS 4391	CONFERENCE COURSE	3
DS 4491	CONFERENCE COURSE	4
KINE 3304	ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION & SPORT	3

Core courses requiring prior approval from director

HIST 4395	HISTORY SEMINAR	3
Electives (up to two courses)		
ART 4304	ART AND THE HUMAN CONDITION	3
ASL 1441	BEGINNING AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE I	4
ASL 1442	BEGINNING AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE II	4
ASL 2313	INTERMEDIATE AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE I	3
ASL 2314	INTERMEDIATE AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE II	3
ANTH 3369	MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY	3
HEED 3330	CONSUMER HEALTH AND PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEMS	3
HIST 4307	HISTORY OF MEDICINE	3
HIST 4309	SOCIAL DARWINISM AND EUGENICS	3
HIST 4333	COMPARATIVE CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY	3
HUMA 3300	MEDICAL HUMANITIES	3
HUMA 3350	CLINICAL MEDICINE AND THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE	3
HUMA 3360	AMERICAN HEALTHCARE THROUGH FILM	3
KINE 3307	SPORT AND SOCIETY: ISSUES AND DEBATES	3
LING 2371	LANGUAGE IN A MULTICULTURAL USA	3
MANA 4326	DIVERSITY IN ORGANIZATIONS	3
MODL 4310	GRAPHIC NOVELS AND THE MEDICAL WORLD	3
PHIL 3319	BIOMEDICAL ETHICS	3
POLS 3309	HEALTH POLITICS, POLICY, AND ADVOCACY	3
POLS 4340	FEDERAL SOCIAL POLICY	3
POLS 4350	HEALTH POLITICS AND POLICY	3
SOCI 3318	SELF AND SOCIAL IDENTITY	3
SOCI 3342	SOCIOLOGY OF THE HUMAN BODY	3
or KINE 3342	SOCIOLOGY OF THE HUMAN BODY	
SOCI 4320	MEDICAL SOCIOLOGY	3
THEA 3351	ROBOTS, DIGITAL HUMANITIES, AND THEATRE	3
Electives requiring prior approval from director		
ANTH 3330	CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND IDENTITY	3
ART 4396	SPECIAL STUDIES IN ART HISTORY	3
COMM 4350	HEALTH COMMUNICATION	3
ECON 3301	THE ECONOMICS OF HEALTH	3
ENGL 3347	TOPICS IN MULTICULTURAL AMERICAN LITERATURES	3
ENGL 4345	TOPICS IN CRITICAL THEORY	3
HIST 3330	U.S. LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY, COLONIAL TO 1877	3
HIST 3331	U.S. LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY, 1877 TO PRESENT	3
HUMA 3340	TOPICS IN HUMANITIES	3
KINE 2351	HEALTH ISSUES IN DIVERSE & VULNERABLE POPULATIONS	3
KINE 3350	URBANIZATION AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS	3
PHIL 3341	TOPICS IN BIOETHICS	3
SCIE 4304	DIAGNOSIS OF HUMAN DISEASE	3
SOCI 3336	SOCIAL INEQUALITY	3
SOCW 3307	DIVERSE POPULATIONS	3
SPED 4304	ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY	3
SPED 4307	SPECIAL EDUCATION LEGAL AND POLICY ISSUES	3

COURSES

DS 2301. TOPICS IN DISABILITY STUDIES. 3 Hours.

Special topics of interest in the field of Disability Studies. May be repeated for credit when the topic changes.

DS 3307. HISTORY OF DISABILITY. 3 Hours.

Examines the history of ideas about disability, the historical lives of people with disabilities, and the history of disability policy. The growth of asylums, the rise of the eugenics movement, a historical look at freak shows, the impact of industrialization on experiences of disability, the evolution of special education, the role of ideas about disability in colonialism, the historical treatment of disabled veterans, and the development of the disability rights movement. Geographic focus will vary. Offered as HIST 3307 and DS 3307; credit will only be granted once. Prerequisite: HIST 1311 and HIST 1312.

DS 3308. HISTORY OF MADNESS. 3 Hours.

Examines insanity in its social and historical contexts through the prisms of class, race, gender, and disability from the birth of the asylum in the eighteenth century to contemporary debates about depression and psychopharmacology. Focuses on madness and psychiatry in the Global North, with comparisons to the Global South. Offered as HIST 3308 and DS 3308; credit will be granted in only one department.

DS 3312. DISABILITY & SOCIAL WORK. 3 Hours.

Examines major themes in disability and social work. Topics include basic understandings of disability, lived experiences of people with disabilities, legal and policy perspectives, working with adults and children with a variety of disabilities, history of disability policy and disability rights, disability advocacy, and resources in the community, among others. Offered as DS 3312 and SOCW 3312; credit will only be granted in one department.

DS 3321. TOPICS IN DISABILITY STUDIES. 3 Hours.

Special topics of interest in the field of disability studies. May be repeated for credit when the topic changes.

DS 3327. CYBORGS AND PROSTHETICS. 3 Hours.

Explores the history, theories, and evolving representations of prosthetics, bionics, cyborgism, and the post-human. Investigates the origins and development of the prosthetics industry, historical experiences of prosthetics users, and cultural depictions and debates about human-technology interactions. Offered as DS 3327 and HIST 4327 and previously as DS 3321 and HIST 4388; credit will only be granted once.

DS 3331. RESEARCH IN DISABILITY STUDIES. 3 Hours.

Introduction to the theories and methods that disability studies scholars use to conduct research and present their findings in written and oral form. Recommended: HIST 3307 or DS 3321.

DS 3346. DISABILITY IN MASS MEDIA. 3 Hours.

Explores how mass media frames disability and neurodiversity for the general public. Focuses on issues related to disability and mass media representation, including journalism, TV, film, advertising, photography, documentary, video games, and the Internet. Topics may include media models of representation, inspiration porn, disability blogs, accessible media, and disabled mimicry in TV and film, among others. Offered as DS 3346 and COMM 3346; credit will be granted in only one department.

DS 3355. UNIVERSAL DESIGN & ACCESSIBILITY IN THE PERFORMING ARTS. 3 Hours.

Explores the principles of Universal Design using the performing arts as a case study: creating environments, events, buildings, and products to accommodate the broadest spectrum of human ability, size, age, and other characteristics. Investigates how to put into practice the accessibility guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Performing is not required. Offered as THEA 3355 and DS 3355; credit will only be granted in one department.

DS 3399. DISABILITY AND ART. 3 Hours.

Explores the many connections between disability and art, including both art created by people with disabilities and the wide variety of artistic representations about disability. Examines the purposes of art-making by people with disabilities: for therapeutic reasons, as a means of self-expression, to achieve professional goals, or as an act of activism. Investigates historical depictions of disability in art as well as art's role as a visual voice for the disability rights movement. Offered as DS 3399 and ART 3399; credit will only be granted once. Prerequisite: Any two of the three courses ART 1309, ART 1310, and ART 1317; or permission from the instructor or Disability Studies.

DS 4100. WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL. 1 Hour.

Only open to adapted sports student athletes. May be repeated 10 times. Prerequisite: permission from the director of the Minor in Disability Studies.

DS 4191. CONFERENCE COURSE. 1 Hour.

Directed independent study for the advanced undergraduate. A close examination of a chosen topic through research and/or reading; format designed by instructor and student. Course may be repeated for credit once with a change in faculty. Prerequisite: Prior approval of the instructor and the director of the Disabilities Studies minor.

DS 4291. CONFERENCE COURSE. 2 Hours.

Directed independent study for the advanced undergraduate. A close examination of a chosen topic through research and/or reading; format designed by instructor and student. Course may be repeated for credit once with a change in faculty. Prerequisite: Prior approval of the instructor and the director of the Disabilities Studies minor.

DS 4329. DISABILITY & WORK. 3 Hours.

Explores the complex relationship between disability and work within the United States from a current and historical perspective. Topics include study of the Americans with Disabilities Act; research on the diversity, population, and changes in proportions of people with disabilities; employment rates and experiences of people with disabilities; attitudes and perspectives surrounding and affecting the employment opportunities and experiences of people with disabilities; and ways to provide inclusive, non-discriminatory workplaces. Offered as MANA 4329 and DS 4329; credit will only be granted once. Prerequisite: 60 hours or MANA 4326 or Disability Studies permission.

DS 4391. CONFERENCE COURSE. 3 Hours.

Directed independent study for the advanced undergraduate. A close examination of a chosen topic through research and/or reading; format designed by instructor and student. Course may be repeated for credit once with a change in faculty. Prerequisite: permission from the director of the Minor in Disability Studies.

DS 4395. DISABILITY STUDIES INTERNSHIP. 3 Hours.

Supervised internship in which students apply the academic skills they have acquired in Disability Studies courses by working in a related non-profit or business environment. Prerequisite: HIST 3307 or 3 hours of core disability studies courses; permission of the instructor.

DS 4491. CONFERENCE COURSE. 4 Hours.

Directed independent study for the advanced undergraduate. A close examination of a chosen topic through research and/or reading; format designed by instructor and student. Course may be repeated for credit once with a change in faculty. Prerequisite: Permission from the director of the Minor in Disability Studies.